

Me and Computers

Over time, I've discovered a little bit about myself and my relationship with my Computers. One of the biggest things seems to be that while I like advancement, I'm not too big on change. More accurately, when I've found something I like, I'd rather improve upon that than jump to something different because it's supposed to be better. It may be the same for many other people. I still use my Amiga 4000 regularly, though not quite as regularly as I used to. Parts of it are over ten years old now, which is the computer equivalent of frikkin' ancient for something not being used for "retro" purposes. Its case is off and wires, drives and other parts are scattered, for the sake of keeping it running as long as possible, even though it looks more like an autopsy than a working machine.

The main reason for this devotion is there is still software I use on the Amiga that I can't use on other machines — at least not currently. I keep saying that if the situation changed, if the software I used was ported over or the Amiga compatibility of MorphOS on my Pegasos 2 was increased, that I would leave the slow Amiga to rot and move on, but I'm not sure that's really the case. There will always be some software, game, or whatever which will not be compatible with new systems, and not well suited to emulators, and therefore a reason to keep the Amiga around, even if it's

only to play "Worms: The Director's Cut."

On a related note, I don't get as much use out of my Pegasos 2 as 1 could potentially. How much I do with it depends greatly on the available software, which includes MorphOS-specific stuff, and whatever Amiga software works without intolerable problems. I might be able to do a lot with Linux on the Pegasos, but that seemed different and beside the point of have a Pegasos for me. I have tried to keep up with the progress of AROS, which Jim Lawrence shows off often at meetings. It shows a ton of potential, as it's an open-source Amiga-clone OS which runs on cheap PC hardware (and more), but I can't really work up too much interest until 680x0 emulation for Amiga software compatibility is worked into it, so I could get more practical use out of it — hopefully similar use that I would get out of the Amiga.

I use a Mac constantly nowadays, mostly for the task of keeping up with the internet, a task the Amiga and its cousins have grown ill-equipped to handle, with each new proprietary "standard" thrown at us by a software maker or web designer with something to prove. The Mac's job is mostly to do the things it would be extremely inconvenient to do (I won't say impossible, but it would require learning to program or commissioning software creation to be done) using the Amiga or Pegasos, some examples being web-browsing on sites loaded down with Flash or Java or scripts, video

editing, and DVD creation. I'm far from a Mac convert like some folks I've seen, since I don't forget the simple power the Amiga offered so easily. As well-considered as the Mac is for such things, I have not gotten into graphics or desktop publishing on the Mac, partly from the expensive nature of the software I'd use, and mostly because I have most of what I need on the Amiga and Pegasos already, and I am used to and enjoy the way it works. It's pretty obvious to me that, much like those people who build new hardware functions into Commodore 64s and Atari 800s, I can't really let go of my old Amiga, want it to last forever, and stay relevant to the computing world in general as long as possible.

On a different, yet semi-related note, the world of video games is getting ready for another upheaval. Microsoft's latest X-box has been on the market for a good while now, and Sony and Nintendo's offerings will be available before the month is out. I notice machines are getting far more expensive nowadays, especially the big Blu-Ray PS3. They also seem to do a lot, if only from all that computing power needed to run a high-end game. I lost most of my interest in "modern" gaming somewhere in the nineties, as games became more a showcase of technology and an investment of life than a simple fun time. My "regular" game machine is my Atari 7800, which plays its own games and the old 2600 games. I prefer many of these games, because they're the type you can play for as long or as short a time as you want, since you

don't necessarily have the same goal to advance and finish the game like you do in most graphic extravaganzas.

I've mentioned various "Plug and Play" TV games like the Atari Flashback and Jeri Ellsworth's C=64-in-a-stick in the past, so I've been finding the retro gaming world of more interest than the modern one. The people who made the Atari Flashback series are not resting on their laurels, though what is in the works may take some time and patience to get here. One project is the Flashback 3, based on the hardware of the Atari 400/800 computers (and the 5200 game machine). Another, which may come first, is a portable version of the Atari 2600-based Flashback 2, battery powered with a small LCD screen. The (potential) beauty of both these (hopefully)

upcoming devices is they will both have means to add games and software to them over and above those included. I look forward to them very much. Considering there's also a project to make an Amiga-on-a-chip system as well, it may well become no longer necessary to keep my old Amiga running, and replace it with something in a tiny box.

...by Eric Schwartz
from the AmiTech-Dayton Gazette, November 2006

AmigaMCCC News

MCCC

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December Calendar

December — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter

7:00 pm — Grand Prairie Public

901 Conover Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75049

December — Board of Director's Meeting

7:15 pm — Location TBD

December 30 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

No Meetings This Month

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